IN THE CLAIMS

Please cancel Claims 1-8 without prejudice, and add the following additional claims.

11. A holding and positioning assembly for securing surgical accessory instruments in place during surgery, said assembly comprising a swiveling and rotatable seat for the accessory instruments, said seat including means for gripping the instruments and said seat being connected to an elastic mechanical arm, said mechanical arm being sufficiently flexible so as to bend before the tensile strength of the tissue of a surgical patient is reached during maneuvering of the mechanical arm and seat during surgery.

12. The assembly of Claim 11 wherein said mechanical arm is a coil spring.

13. A holding and positioning assembly for securing surgical accessory instruments in place during surgery, said assembly comprising a swiveling and rotatable seat for the accessory instruments, said seat including means for gripping the instruments and said seat being linked to a mechanical arm via a multi-directionally movable joint mechanism, said mechanical arm being formed from a series of rectilinear components with each of said rectilinear components being connected to an adjacent rectilinear component by resilient connectors which are sufficiently flexible so as to bend before the tensile strength of the tissue of a surgical patient is reached during maneuvering of the mechanical arm and seat during surgery.

14. The assembly of Claim 13 wherein said resilient connectors are torsion springs.

15. The assembly of Claim 13 wherein said resilient connectors are formed from an elastomeric material.

16. A holding and positioning assembly for securing surgical accessory instruments in place during surgery, said assembly comprising a swiveling and rotatable seat for the accessory instruments, said seat including means for gripping the instruments and said seat being linked to a mechanical arm via a multi-directionally movable joint mechanism, said mechanical arm being manually movable during surgery to alter the position of said seat in said assembly, wherein movement of said mechanical arm and seat is restricted to a cone having an included angle of no more than about 35^{o}.